USAWC STRATEGY RESEARCH PROJECT

ENHANCING PEACEKEEPING
CAPABILITIES IN WEST AFRICA

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Report Documentation Page		*Form Approved* *OMB No. 0704-0188*

1. REPORT DATE **18 MAR 2005**	2. REPORT TYPE	3. DATES COVERED **-**

4. TITLE AND SUBTITLE **Enhancing Peacekeeping Capabilities in West Africa**	5a. CONTRACT NUMBER
	5b. GRANT NUMBER
	5c. PROGRAM ELEMENT NUMBER
6. AUTHOR(S) **Insa Sagna**	5d. PROJECT NUMBER
	5e. TASK NUMBER
	5f. WORK UNIT NUMBER

7. PERFORMING ORGANIZATION NAME(S) AND ADDRESS(ES) **U.S. Army War College,Carlisle Barracks,Carlisle,PA,17013-5050**	8. PERFORMING ORGANIZATION REPORT NUMBER

9. SPONSORING/MONITORING AGENCY NAME(S) AND ADDRESS(ES)	10. SPONSOR/MONITOR'S ACRONYM(S)
	11. SPONSOR/MONITOR'S REPORT NUMBER(S)

12. DISTRIBUTION/AVAILABILITY STATEMENT
Approved for public release; distribution unlimited

13. SUPPLEMENTARY NOTES

14. ABSTRACT
See attached.

15. SUBJECT TERMS

16. SECURITY CLASSIFICATION OF:			17. LIMITATION OF ABSTRACT	18. NUMBER OF PAGES	19a. NAME OF RESPONSIBLE PERSON
a. REPORT **unclassified**	b. ABSTRACT **unclassified**	c. THIS PAGE **unclassified**		**23**	

ABSTRACT

AUTHOR: Lieutenant Colonel Insa Sagna

TITLE: Enhancing peacekeeping capabilities in West Africa

FORMAT: Strategy Research Project

DATE: 18 March 2005   PAGES: 23   CLASSIFICATION: Unclassified

         The overall intent of this SRP is to explain the complexity of peacekeeping in West Africa,
and to provide a tentative recommendation to resolve the strategic force contribution and
transportation problems encountered by the Economic Community of West Africa peacekeeping
force. In this context of generalized crises throughout the sub-region, the fact that ECOMOG
(Economic Community Monitoring Group) exists and the fact that African Union (AU) supports
ECOMOG's effort signify the realization of a dream shared by leaders that Africans should take
greater initiative in the resolution of their own problems. In addition, the initiative in the
conception and implementation of the force projection capabilities should belong to the African
themselves and then they should, afterwards, look for help from the international community
including Western European countries and the United States of America, to carry out its efforts.

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ENHANCING PEACEKEEPING CAPABILITIES IN WEST AFRICA

While nations are implementing strategies to take advantage of the phenomenon of globalization and creating economic and political unions, Africa is drawing attention due to its many intrastate and interstate crises. Since the accession to independence, the continent has experienced intensive conflicts including border disputes, tensions over governance and economic development, ethnic strife, and human rights abuse. Most West African countries have experienced one or another of the kinds of conflict mentioned above. Examples include civil wars in Liberia, Sierra Leone, the Ivory Coast and Guinea Bissau. Burkina Faso still faces a severe crisis resulting from human rights abuse. The questions of allocation of oil revenues and separatism are still unresolved in Nigeria.[1] In Togo, the opposition is calling on the government to respect the constitution concerning the military transmission of power to Faure, son of the late Togolese leader, Gnassingbe Eyadema. In other cases, poor governance, along with corruption on the part of some African political leaders, has plunged some countries into the depths of despair. West Africa is, today, the most affected by the misery of thousands of people, particularly women and children consigned to refugee status. After the fall of the Soviet Union, the international community, especially the Western countries, finding no vital interest, hesitated to intervene during crises. It became clear to African leaders that more than ever, African problems must be solved by the Africans themselves.

In this context, African heads of states, in the framework of the African Union, seek to empower the sub-regional organizations to prevent or resolve peacefully the conflicts between countries. The Economic Community of West Africa (ECOWAS), created in 1975 to promote the economic development of the sub-region, deployed for the first time through its military branch, the ECOWAS Monitoring Group (ECOMOG), in June 1990 in Liberia, and later in Sierra Leone and Guinea Bissau to halt civil wars. But to fulfill its desire to help eradicate conflicts, ECOWAS needs support from the international community. This paper will explain the nature of conflicts, analyze ECOWAS and African Union interactions in conflict resolution, review the international and Western response, and provide recommendations for improving logistical support to future peacekeeping operations.

AN EXPLANATION OF THE NATURE OF CONFLICTS IN WEST AFRICA

Contemporary crises are characterized in West Africa by economic and social problems, political challenges, and ethnic and cultural conflicts. The reasons are well known:

THE IMPACT OF EUROPEAN COLONIALISM.

The artificial boundaries created by colonial rulers as they ruled and finally left Africa had the effect of bringing together many different ethnic groups within a state that did not reflect, nor had the ability to accommodate or provide for, cultural and ethnic diversity. Indeed, the European agreements that had divided Africa into states paid little attention to cultural and ethnic boundaries, and ethnic groups had little opportunity or need to form political alliances or accommodations under repressive colonial rules. The colonial system totally transformed the historical political geography of Africa, and the transition from colonialism was not easy. [2]

As a result, the struggle to nation-states has proved very difficult. For example, after 1939, the European colonizers, distracted by World War II, did little to extend their administrative colonial networks. Confronted by the reconstruction of Europe when the war ended, they hardly had the resources to make a major investment in Africa.[3] After independence, the new African leaders who came to power prematurely faced the same problem that their European predecessors had confronted because they still possessed incomplete administrative systems.

In addition, colonialism had negative effects on the economy of the region. The unequal international trade and economic relations instituted just after the independence era did little to benefit the African people and further exacerbated the problem. World Bank policies like structural adjustment have aggressively opened up West African economies with disastrous effects, including the requirements to cut back on health, education (and AIDS is a huge problem), public services and so on, while growing food and extracting resources for exports, etc, thus continuing the colonial era arrangement.[4]

In sum, the poverty of West Africa and the immense burden of debt have paralyzed the sub-region's ability to develop.

INTERNAL CAUSES

The lack of good governance and democracy, the negation of individual and collective rights and shortcomings in matters relating to the culture of peace, have a significant role to play in explaining the causes of conflicts and internal upheavals in some African countries (coups d'etat, civil wars, etc.). In addition, the Post-Cold War era has been characterized by the disengagement of super powers, because Africa was no longer a strategic stake. The confrontation between the two blocks that allowed non-democratic and corrupt regimes to survive despite the legitimate claims of their population was over.[5] As a result, internal clashes began to appear more and more in some African countries. The populations, knowing that their regimes were no longer supported abroad, demanded justice and democracy. Some

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governments resisted and tried to keep ruling their countries as they had in the past. Also, the proliferation of small arms in the sub-region, due to the end of the Cold War and the easy movement of fighters across borders, helped fuel many conflicts. On top of that, venal interests and activities in West Africa have also contributed to exploitation, conflict and poverty for ordinary people while enriching foreign and African elites.

Examples are numerous. In Liberia in 1989, Charles Taylor launched a rebellion against Liberian president Samuel Doe, a member of the Krahn ethnic group who seized power in a bloody coup. Sierra-Leone's civil war was an outcome of Liberia's civil war. Ivory Coast, which had been known as an example of prosperity and diversity, is split into two parts under a UN peacekeeping mission. The main reason for this civil war was Ivorian-ness, introduced by former President Henry Konan Bedie, to exclude his opponent Alassane Ouatara, a northern politician with family links to Burkina Faso, from running in the1995 presidential elections. Recently in Togo, as a result of President Eyadema's death, the army planned the succession of his son in violation of the constitution.

ECOWAS AND THE AFRICAN UNION INTERACTIONS IN CONFLICT RESOLUTION

ECOWAS PEACEKEEPING OPERATIONS

Convinced by the tremendous underdevelopment challenges they faced after the withdrawal of Western countries, the West African heads of states felt the necessity to create cooperative alliances to promote the economic development of the sub-region. The impetus behind the creation of ECOWAS was the desire to develop an economic cooperation and integration within West Africa. The idea came from Nigeria and Togo to form the West African Economic Community (WAEC) in 1972, which would remain open to other sub-regional states. In 1973, a ministerial conference on ECOWAS was held in Lome, Togo, and a summit of heads of states and government adopted a treaty on ECOWAS on 28 May 1975. In the beginning, the treaty did not include any security aim. Economic issues were prioritized as a means of development, in order to get West African countries out of poverty. However, the adoption by its members of a Protocol on Non Aggression in 1978 marked the first step in the establishment of an ECOWAS security framework. This protocol was criticized because of the lack of an institutional mechanism for responding to security challenges, and was replaced by the Protocol Relating to Mutual Assistance on Defense in 1981. Unlike the first agreement, this protocol applies not only to conflict between ECOWAS members states, but also to internal conflicts supported from outside a member state. The protocol envisions the establishment of a security framework, including a standby force comprised of national units of ECOWAS member's states

that would be available in case of aggression, and decision making and administrative structures. It also envisages the appointment of a force commander to the Allied Armed Forces of the Community (AAFC). But none of the structures described above had become fully operational until 1990 and the advent of the Liberian civil war. The total absence of security forces and the commitment of West African leaders to intervene militarily in support of a member in trouble led to the creation of a new structure, the ECOWAS Monitoring Group (ECOMOG).

Considered in the beginning to be an ineffective instrument, ECOMOG has become the main peacekeeping tool in West Africa.

ECOMOG's first deployment was in Liberia in 1989, when Charles Taylor launched a rebellion against President Samuel Doe. The Economic Community of West African leaders found it necessary to send troops to this country terrified by civil war. When ECOMOG forces landed in Monrovia, the capital, in 1990, the rebels shelled the port and the beach and sent troops to attack them. With their commitment, ECOMOG soldiers repelled Taylor's men and set up camp in Monrovia. During the development of their mission, ECOMOG met persistent operational difficulties due to the lack of financing and equipment. In response to ECOWAS' need, the United States provided financial and logistic support to increase African troops and to stop the rebel advance. In 1993, ECOWAS brokered a peace agreement signed by all factions to prepare for general elections in 1997. Charles Taylor was elected and, at his request, a small contingent of ECOMOG remained in Liberia to consolidate peace.[6]

ECOMOG intervened in Sierra Leone when Major Johnny Paul Koroma overthrew the President, Ahmet Tejan Kabbah, in a coup in May 1997. Due to the illegitimacy of this government, the Economic Community of West African leaders decided on the re-establishment of legal authority. ECOMOG forces, composed of Nigerian troops, launched an offensive, captured the capital and reinstalled the legitimate government of President Kabbah. After the withdrawal of this force, the situation deteriorated again in 2000. At the request of the United Nations and the African Union, ECOMOG intervened. After being trained by the United States military, troops form Nigeria, Senegal, Ghana and others countries are still maintaining peace in this country.[7]

In Guinea Bissau, the ECOMOG intervention was due to the dismissal of Armed Forces Chief of Staff General Ansoumana Mane by the President. The General was involved in the Casamance crisis in Senegal, supplying arms to rebels to fight the Senegal government. Most of the military rallied around the General's cause in the overthrow of President Vieira. Due to a stake in its national security and because of a bilateral defense agreement with this country,

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Senegal and Guinea intervened in support of the President by providing expeditionary forces. Public opinion became very hostile to this intervention, and the government of Senegal, at the request of President Nino Vieira, transformed this intervention into an ECOMOG operation with a mandate to monitor a cease fire and facilitate elections. After the withdrawal of Senegal and Guinea troops, and because of the small number of ECOMOG troops (600) and lack of logistics support, the insurgents re-attacked and overthrew Vieira before the elections.

THE AFRICAN UNION PROVIDES A POLITICAL SUPPORT TO ECOWAS

At the political level, the reality of conflicts and the difficulties of finding adequate and durable solutions led the African heads of states to review the multiple failures in their states. Generally, crises do not occur invisibly or without explanation. They are always the result of known situations. Therefore, circulation and analysis of information are indispensable for early warning and conflict prevention. African leaders, in their transformation of the Organization of African Unity (OAU) into the African Union (AU) in Togo, July 11, 2000, set as one of their priorities, the establishment of a conflict and security management mechanism comprising several organs[8]:

- Peace and Security Council (PSC);
- Panel of the Wise;
- Continental Early Warning System aimed at preventing conflicts;
- African Standby Force integrated with regional mechanisms (contingents, observers);
- Military Staff Committee; and
- Peace Fund.

The Peace and Security Council is a standing decision making organ for the prevention, management and resolution of conflicts and has a close relationship with the regional mechanisms. The most important of these is ECOMOG, whose role has often been commended by the UN Security Council and lastly by resolution 1497 of 1 August 2003 regarding its involvement in the Liberian ceasefire agreement. Article 16 of the protocol delineates this relationship by actually subjecting the regional mechanisms to the superior authority of the Peace and Security Council. In particular, it provides that the regional mechanisms are part of the overall security architecture of the African Union, which has the primary responsibility for promoting peace, security and stability in Africa. The council is also responsible of harmonizing and coordinating the regional mechanisms' activities so as to ensure that these activities are consistent with the objectives and principles of the African Union. Decisions are taken by the vote of its 15 members.

In establishing the PSC, AU members have clearly indicated that they are willing to take concrete steps to promote peace and security, through close coordination with sub-regional organizations and the United Nations. Within the framework of the PSC protocol, regional security mechanisms should be envisioned as a crucial part of the regional security architecture. Another pertinent reason for close cooperation and collaboration between the AU and regional organizations is related to the fact that there is a limit to the burden that sub-regional organizations can bear for their own security, and the lack of sub-regional capacity may tend to prolong conflicts. Also, the AU has provided diplomatic support for sub-regional interventions, but its financial and logistical contribution to such regional efforts has been limited.

However, the idea of decentralizing the AU mechanism has been welcomed, because it constitutes a consensus based on the need to make sub-regional organizations responsible for preventive diplomacy by proximity, to seek the contribution of eminent personalities whose mediation can help to prevent conflicts, and to set up sub-regional political structures that they can institutionalize as decentralized mechanisms for conflict prevention. These regional organization groups, including ECOWAS, SADC (Southern African Development Community), and others African sub-regional organizations, are working well with the AU. They are building blocks for the AU and need to be strengthened to take the leading role in resolving sub-regional crises and the AU should play a supporting complementary role. In addition, the sub-regional mechanisms will depend on the AU mechanism through closer consultations, harmonization and coordination. Nevertheless, the AU will remain the supervising agency within the framework of preventive diplomacy.[9]

To achieve effective support to the regional organizations, the AU has the moral obligation to maintain close collaboration with the International Community. This co-operation occurs in the areas of diplomatic, political and economic activities to resource (financial and material) mobilization in support of its peace and security agenda. In the context of building sub-regional organizations' capacity for peacekeeping, the AU is expected to continue to be the recipient and beneficiary of external support programs, in terms of equipment and financial support for the establishment and sustainment of peace operations. In addition, the AU and regions are benefiting from other equipment and training assistance programs such as the African Contingency Operations Training Assistance (ACOTA), Renforcement des Capacites Africaines de Maintien de la Paix (RECAMP), the British Military Advisory and Training Team (BMTT), and programs from other European countries. All these have helped to enhance skills, further doctrinal standardization, and improve the logistics capacity for African peacekeeping.

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INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY SUPPORT OF ECOWAS EFFORT

Aware of the limitation of African capabilities and the commitment of its leaders to solve African problems by themselves, several countries have developed peacekeeping training initiatives with Africa. The American, British, and French programs are the most substantial.

WESTERN EUROPEAN COUNTRIES' CONTRIBUTIONS

Western European countries such as France and Great Britain provide support initiatives to the armies in West Africa. Germany also provides support, but on a low scale. The support concepts conceived since the independence of many African countries in the 1960s have not changed. The French support initiative is based on training regiments at the sub-regional level with the goal of establishing forces prepared to participate in UN and AU authorized peacekeeping operations. The French conduct sub-regional peacekeeping training exercises and have repositioned heavy equipment in selected countries through their own peacekeeping initiative, Renforcement des Capacites Africaines de Maintien de la Paix (RECAMP).

Unlike RECAMP, the British focus of effort is training personnel in leadership positions. Based on the relatively small size of the UK program, the primary attention focuses on "training the trainer". The first goal of the British program is the development of first rate peacekeeping training centers within the military staff colleges in Ghana, Zambia, and Uganda with British Military Advisory and Training Teams (BMTTs) collocated with each staff college.[10]

THE UNITED STATES CONTRIBUTION

The US program, known as the African Contingency Operations Training Assistance (ACOTA) is a program created by the President Bush administration in 2002 to take place of the African Crisis Response Initiative (ACRI) to provide training and equipment in peacekeeping operations to selected countries on a bilateral basis. Five countries including Mali, Senegal, Ghana, and Benin, are conducting this program in West Africa. It is the US government's primary initiative to enhance the capacity of selected countries to respond quickly to peacekeeping and humanitarian relief contingencies on the African continent. This initiative, combined with ongoing International Military Education Training (IMET) programs, supports West Africa in its goal of establishing a solid foundation in humanitarian and peacekeeping operations. It seeks also to promote common doctrine, interoperability and standard communications technology among West African forces.

Foreign Military Financing was raised from $18.5 million in 1999 to $23 million under the 2004 request for ACOTA in Africa, and from $11.1 million to $12.5 million the same year for the IMET program.[11]

THE UNITED NATIONS INITIATIVE

Convinced by the African leaders' commitment to take their fate in hands, the UN has emerged today as a focal point for international efforts to promote peace-building, peacemaking and national reconciliation throughout the continent. The United Nation special initiative on Africa reflects the engagement and determination to work collectively for the enhancement of African capabilities and development.[12] This initiative contains three major actions to strengthen peace-making and peace-building in the region: first, strengthening the AU capacity for peacekeeping; second, enhancing select civil society organizations engaged in peacekeeping; third, utilizing mass media to enhance communications systems for peace-building. Media communications systems seem to be useful in African countries, because they allow the masses of people access to express their view about significant issues and fulfill participation in the democratic transition process and conflict resolution on their continent.

DIFFICULTIES ENCOUNTERED

All West African leaders agreed that it was time, after forty-five years of independence, to take charge of their own security. However, other than Nigeria, none of the West African countries were economically capable of supporting a projected military force for a long period of time. Difficulties relate not only to financial, political, equipment and training problems, but also to limited projection capabilities.

In addition to political complexity due to Nigeria's hegemonic ambitions to lead ECOWAS, and linguistic differences (5 anglophone, 9 francophone, and 2 lusophone), the following difficulties have always threatened to undermine ECOWAS' potential:

- The lack of financial resources undermines ECOMOG actions. For instance, during peacekeeping operations, when the salary and per-diem are not regularly and well paid, the peacekeepers become less motivated and discipline problems occur. The soldiers become engaged in lucrative activities rather than operations. It was the case in Liberia. Neither ECOWAS nor the AU can financially maintain ECOMOG peacekeeping missions for more than six months.
- Military capabilities and capacities are sometimes very limited. Indeed, restoring peace in civil war needs large number of well-trained and well-equipped troops. ECOMOG missions have never fielded more than 10,000 men. So instead of controlling the whole country, these troops controlled only the capital, leaving the other part to the insurgents' rule.

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- The lack of air and sea capability is a major problem during force projection. In fact, during peacekeeping operations, as in Sudan today, the African force could not deploy immediately and had to wait many months before deploying with the support of the Western European countries and the United States. This deplorable situation is still due to some major logistical problems; among which transportation is critical.

POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

The recommended solution to developing force contributions and projection capabilities should be an African initiative based on the political will of African leaders to support ECOWAS peacekeeping operations.

RESPONSE TO FORCE CONTRIBUTION

In the recent past, African countries protected their sovereignty and did not understand the advantage of global cooperation in terms of defense. But the complexity of conflicts on the continent and the experience of Liberia led the head of states to revise ECOWAS in order to develop an institutionalized Mechanism for Crisis Prevention, Management and Resolution. If this mechanism works well at the sub-regional level, a standby force for rapid reaction, which is not yet operative, constitutes one of ECOWAS' shortcomings that need to be revised.

Indeed, the Economic Community of West African States, which has led numerous peacekeeping operations in West Africa, must continue to develop the sub-regional regional standby force for rapid interventions. A standby force that would include headquarters planning and management staff in reflection of NATO should be located in one of its member states. These standby multidisciplinary units, a brigade size with civilian and military components, should be comprised of national units from each ECOWAS member state that are earmarked, trained, equipped and organized for rapid deployment on short notice. For each mission, the strength, standard operating procedures, and rules of engagement would vary according to that force's mandate, and the deployment would be rapid.

For training, the ECOWAS leaders should take advantage of the peacekeeping training centers including Zambakro Peacekeeping Training Center in Cote d'Ivoire, as a tactical institution, the Kofi Annan International Peacekeeping Training Center in Ghana, as an operational level center, and the National War College in Nigeria, as a strategic level institution. These training centers will allow some degree of standardization on issues specific to peace operations.

For their deployment, the following scenarios should be taken:

- Scenario 1. ECOWAS/ Sub-regional Military advice to a political and diplomatic mission.
- Scenario 2. ECOWAS/ Sub- regional observer mission co-developed with an AU mission.
- Scenario 3. ECOWAS/ Sub-regional peacekeeping force (PKF) under UN Chapter VI for preventive deployment missions with a ceasefire agreement.
- Scenario 4. ECOWAS PKF for complex multidimensional missions, in critical operations such as disarmament, demobilization and reintegration of belligerents under UN chapter VII.
- Scenario 5. ECOWAS intervention in genocide situations where the international community does not act promptly.

According to scenarios 1, 2, and 3, ECOWAS should be able to deploy in 30 days; to scenario 4, the deployment should be completed within 60 days with the military component being able to deploy in 30 days; according to the nature of the situation, Scenario 5 could not wait more than 15 days after the need for intervention is determined.

Every troop contributing country should be able to ensure the logistical support to its contingent for at least the initial two months; beyond this period, the AU in coordination with the UN should take the leading role in providing logistical support.

RESPONSE TO FORCE PROJECTION CAPABILITIES

A solution to the transportation problem should be an African initiative based on African states' assets with limited financial assistance of the international community. Therefore, the following actions are recommended:

A "nucleus" of logistics headquarters (HQ) should be set up at the ECOWAS standby force headquarters, with the mission to collect from contributing countries accurate transportation data such as type and number of aircraft and ships, with their capacities for transporting troops and equipment and fuel consumption. The logisticians would write the force projection doctrine, and conduct with troops and transport contributing countries, the force projection training, which would be evaluated by ECOWAS and Western countries subject matter experts. This logistic HQ would be engaged in planning, coordinating, managing and supervising the force projection operation in its different aspects.

In West Africa, certain countries such as Nigeria, Ghana, Senegal, Ivory Coast and others should provide their civilian airlines, to supplement their military assets for the initial deployment.

In addition, South Africa, Morocco, Egypt, and Ethiopia, which has demonstrated its force projection capability in Burundi, have their own air and sealift capabilities.[13] These countries should reinforce West African countries assets for rapid intervention. The ECOWAS and the AU leaders should coordinate their efforts to encourage the African states to provide both military and civilian sea and airlift capabilities necessary for ECOMOG deployment.

This African solution for quick deployment is desirable, because each of the countries cited above can provide one or more aircraft transports such as C-130 Hercules, Boeings, C-160 Transall or transport helicopters as well as one or more transport ships such as Batral, Edic, and Ambe tank landing ship for deployment of forces into its mission area.[14] Therefore, the establishment of this logistics HQ structured with G1, G3 and G4 sections would facilitate the collection from these potential contributing countries accurate logistic data of the air and sealift assets they could provide in order to anticipate the planning of the force projection operation.

Also, this solution is suitable because these assets could rapidly deploy a force into a mission area such as Ivory Coast. The success of a rapid deployment would depend, on one hand, on a sound force projection doctrine written by this logistic HQ and understood by all parties involved in an operation and on the other hand, on the training based on this doctrine in order to facilitate the interoperability and efficiency of the force.

And finally, this initiative is acceptable, because on one hand, Western states and non-African international organizations would appreciate African efforts to take care of their own destiny and support them in financing the supply of fuel for the early deployment of troops. For instance, this African solution is more economic than the Western countries' solutions, which recently consisted of sending aircraft from Europe to Senegal to deploy the AU forces into Sudan, while ECOWAS and AU could engage rapidly air assets for example from Nigeria to Senegal.

However, the transportation in the area of conflicts presents some risks. For this reason some countries should not be willing to give up their airlift capabilities to ECOWAS. But when crises occur and humanitarian problems become critical, leading countries should understand and sacrifice a part of their sovereignty to the benefit of people in danger.

FUNDING AND REIMBURSEMENT

The financing of peace operations is also a big problem during ECOWAS' mission. The African leaders must do their best to individually encourage and support the ECOWAS peace fund. The member states must also increase and pay regularly their contributions to the regular

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budget, so a significant part of the budget could be dedicated to the peace fund. The use of the peace fund should be reserved exclusively to ECOWAS peacekeeping operations.

In addition to their contributions, it is desirable that the organization receives additional contributions from African and international partners. The availability of this Fund would allow the reimbursement of troop commitments, force projection, as well as other operational costs incurred by member states.

CONCLUSION

It is time for Africa to take charge of its destiny. To do so, it is essential to build up strong organizations in order to contain all types of threats when necessary. With the AU's recent creation of a Protocol for Peace and Security (PSC), the organization has the potential to be a reliable organ of decision for conflict prevention, management and resolution in the continent. The idea of decentralization allows ECOWAS and the sub-regional organizations to work by proximity when crises occur. The challenge is arduous. And Africa, which has many conflicts today, needs to live in peace and to work in harmony and simplicity. Cooperation and coordination of ECOWAS members are essential for more rational, efficient and economical use of their very limited means available.

The first level of assuring peace and security lies in general with the people in the countries themselves. When consensus is not achieved at the national level, it must be accomplished at the regional or sub-regional level.

ECOMOG signifies a realization of a dream shared by true Africans that African leaders should take greater initiative in the resolution of their problems. The difficulties in the ECOMOG should be resolved by Africans means. At the sub-regional level, the Standby Force described above must become a reality. The transportation policy should be an African initiative based on African sea and airlift capabilities. Some African countries, such as Nigeria in West Africa and South Africa, have transported their troops to their mission areas, because they have airlift capabilities unlike other African states. In pooling their transportation assets, the African states should be able to provide to the AU the transportation means necessary for the initial deployment of an ECOWAS peacekeeping force.

Today, ECOMOG, the sub-regional organization, is providing satisfaction. It has improved its ability to face the peacekeeping challenge in Liberia, Sierra-Leone, Guinea Bissau and recently in Cote d'Ivoire, but it still needs the support from Western Europe, the US and the rest of the international community. The international effort designed to help Africa augment its peacekeeping capabilities, does not resolve all the problems related to the mission. If West

Africa is to face the difficult challenge of conflict resolution, its partners must remain deeply involved helping to ensure the success of this practical commitment of African leaders to build trust, tolerance and accountability.

WORD COUNT=4901

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